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# TALES FROM THE TREE

The Quarterly Newsletter of Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center



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Website: [www.ziggystree.org](http://www.ziggystree.org)    E-mail: [ziggystreewildlife@gmail.com](mailto:ziggystreewildlife@gmail.com)

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## THE ART OF NEST BUILDING

When you call us about a baby bird that has fallen out of the nest, the first question we'll ask you after determining if the baby is uninjured and too young to fledge (leave the nest) is "can you put it back in the nest?" At times you can find the intact nest and replace the baby.

Or if the nest is on the ground, it can be placed in a wicker basket or Tupperware container with holes poked in the bottom and placed back in the tree. You can also create substitute nest by adding twigs and grass to the basket or container.

It sounds so simple to make that nest. Now, can you imagine doing it without using your hands? That's one of the miracles of our local songbirds. They create these wonderfully intricate structures with just their beaks!

Most songbirds build nests that are in the shape of a cup. The nest may be on a branch or ledge, a hanging plant on your porch or the wreath on your front door. Some are even in a cavity in a tree.



*Eastern Towhee nest*

In a cup shaped nest, the depth of the interior of the nest is usually several times the diameter of the eggs. This allows room for the parent to incubate the eggs, and for the babies to grow after they hatch. It also provides protection from the elements and helps keep the hatchlings warm while the parents are out foraging for food to feed the always hungry babies.

These nests usually incorporate twigs, bark, grass, moss and other fine materials such as hair, snakeskin or fur in their structure. All the materials are carried by the parents with construction taking place over just a few days up to 6 weeks, depending on the species.

Many of the birds with this type of nest structure outgrow the nest before they are fully capable of flying. This is why you see robins and mockingbirds out of the nest a few days before they can fly. This fledgling period is a very important step in their growth – the time when they learn to avoid predators and forage for their own food. Because this is also a dangerous time for them, we recommend keeping pets confined or under supervision during the spring and summer months if you know you have birds nesting in your yard.

One of our favorite birds, the Chimney Swift, builds a nest that is a half saucer, a flatter structure than the typical cup nest. This nest is built of twigs that the parents break with their beaks and then glue together with their saliva. The saliva is also used to glue the nest to the chimney wall. Swift nestlings quickly outgrow this small structure and will cling the walls of the chimney as they continue to mature.



Woodpeckers, wrens, chickadees and titmice are some of the cavity nesters we admit for care. They will excavate a hole in the tree or find a natural cavity in a dead or dying limb or tree. Woodpeckers do not build a nest but may line the cavity with wood chips. The smaller songbirds will build a nest within the cavity, similar to the cup nests that are described above.

In the case of cavity nesters, it is important that they are placed back in the nest cavity for a successful reunite with the parents. The parents of cavity nesting birds will not come to an open nest to care for their babies. There are some great plans for nest boxes at [www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org), The Cornell Lab of Ornithology website. The website also includes helpful hints for installing nest boxes to attract the birds to your yard.



*Carolina Wrens in their new home*



One of our rescuers was quite ingenious when it came to reuniting a nest of Carolina Wrens with their parents. The nest had been built in an old car. The car had been moved to the garage before the nest was discovered and due to mechanical issues, could not safely be moved back to the original location. The rescuer was able to set up an old gas grill at the original nest site, and placed the remnants of the original nest in a lantern inside the grill. To top it off, she covered it all with an umbrella. Her wrens were not going to get wet! Even though the babies had been separated from their parents for over 15 hours, mama bird immediately returned to being feeding the hungry youngsters. And as a comment on our human nest building skills, she then began reconstructing the nest to her satisfaction.

Some birds don't build nests at all, but simply lay their eggs in a camouflaged area. Killdeer are famous for this. We've had several friends who have had to rope off a section of their gravel driveways when a killdeer nest was discovered.

Other birds are lazy nest builders. Great Horned Owls will take over an abandoned squirrel or crow nest for their chicks. Why build when you can take over a foreclosed property?

Some hints for locating a nest:

Nests can be at almost any height, from ground level up to 60 feet or more. If you don't immediately see a nest, back away from the area and watch for signs of the parents coming to the tree to feed the babies. This will give you an idea of which tree and at what height you need to look, or if you are putting up a substitute nest, you will have a better idea of where to situate the nest.

The other thing to look for is evidence under the tree, such as whitewash or poop. If you are looking for an owl or hawk nest, you might also find pellets of fur and bone (the stuff they can't digest) or pieces of their dinner, such as bunny or bird parts.

If you do have to place the babies in a substitute nest, we always recommend placing it as high in the tree as you can reach and then monitoring from a distance to assure that the parents have located the babies and are bringing food to the nest.

## BIRTHDAY PARTY BENEFITS ZIGGY'S TREE

Kinsley Moulds celebrated her seventh birthday by asking her friends to bring gifts from our wish list. As you can see, Kinsley's friends were quite generous! The items donated will benefit both the songbird and small mammal programs.

Kinsley is the daughter of Kimberly & Perry Moulds of Brentwood, the granddaughter of Ed & Linda Kraft of Tullahoma and great-granddaughter of Wilma Hasty of Tullahoma.

Pictured here are Kinsley Moulds and LouAnn Partington, songbird specialist and board member of Ziggy's Tree.



A big **THANK YOU** to Kinsley and all of her friends!

Kinsley and her mom learned about us when they found an injured Eastern Cottontail. We are happy to report that the little guy recovered from his injuries and was released!



*Eastern Cottontails*

## NEWS

We've had a busy first half of the year. Our baby mammal season seems to have never ended. Typically our spring baby squirrel season ends in April, but we were receiving neonate babies well into May. We have taken in over 500 baby mammals this year and still have a second baby season ahead of us.

And speaking of the second baby mammal season – we've already have 76 Virginia Opossums in care. That's passel of opossums!



Our baby bird season has been unusual as well. We have taken in about 40 more babies so far this year than we did at the same time last year. And we aren't seeing as many of the birds we typically get, such as robins and wrens. However, we are setting a record for Chimney Swift admissions – we've already taken in 32, about twice the number we normally receive. We've already released 5 of them and are announcing upcoming releases on our Facebook page. Thank goodness we had several new volunteers this year to assist with the extra feedings!

We were honored to be chosen as the charity for **30 Days of Giving** at Peebles in Tullahoma. Thanks to the generous customers and employees, we raised \$768 which was applied to our cage fund.



*American Robin enjoying our new aviary*

## KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

Thanks to all of you that have enrolled your Kroger Rewards card in their Community Rewards program! We've already received \$314 through this program and still have two more quarters to go.

Kroger does not supply us with the names of our supporters – but know that we thank all of you who are helping to make this simple fundraiser a success for us.

This program does require that you re-enroll each August. To do so, go to [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards) between August 1 and August 31 and follow the simple instructions. If you don't have an e-mail address or computer access, you can enroll by calling 1-800-576-4377 and selecting option 3.

We thank you for your continuing support. And please tell your friends about this simple and painless way to support their local wildlife rehabilitators!



*Nestling Chimney Swifts*

For assistance with orphaned or injured mammals or general questions about mammals, call Angela at 615-631-2205.

For assistance with orphaned or injured birds or general questions about birds, call LouAnn at 931-393-4835.

***Looking for a project for your scout troop, church, school or civic group? We'd love to have more squirrel nest boxes, and could also use small bluebird or woodpecker boxes to use with our young cavity nesting birds. Contact us for more information.***

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## WISH LIST

- Gift cards (grocery store, Lowe's, Home Depot, Tractor Supply)
- LCD Projector
- Heating Pads (without automatic shut-off)
- Nuts (pecans, walnuts, acorns)
- Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, kale, sweet potatoes, zucchini)
- Paper Towels
- Facial Tissues
- Toilet Paper
- Reptariums (any size)

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## SUPPORT ZIGGY'S TREE

- Become a member – just complete the application on the back of this newsletter, or visit our website to download and print an application.
- Give a gift membership to a friend!
- Purchase items from our wish list.
- Donate newspapers (we use those to line cages and cover the tables under the cages)
- Select us as your charity for the Kroger Community Cares program – register your Kroger Rewards card at [kroger.com/communityrewards](http://kroger.com/communityrewards) and select Ziggy's Tree as your charity. You still get your gas points and discounts, and Kroger donates money to us!
- Contact us about volunteer opportunities, such as transport, animal releases, administrative/office work, fundraising or contributing to our newsletter
- Like us on Facebook and stay updated on releases, admissions and other news.
- Invite us to speak to your church or civic group – we love to tell people about the work we do!

***Check our website at [www.ziggystree.org](http://www.ziggystree.org) for other ways you can support us!***

# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

## ADVOCATE

Peebles 30 Days of Giving  
Charles Wharton

## SUSTAINING

Banjo Baby Squirrel Fund  
Winchester Family Dentistry  
Jeff Cashdollar  
Kroger Community Rewards

## SUPPORTING

Drs. Patty & Jeffrey Marvel  
Marjorie Bannister  
Carlene Julian

## FAMILY

Carol Shelton \* Mary Ann & Larry Partington  
George Gifford \* Lawrence & Chanda Williams  
Zachary Ray \* Kevin & Laura Finch \* Paula Sedita  
Gina Cleek \* Robyn Mitchell \* Leigh Butler \* Ciara Roehner

## INDIVIDUAL

Billy Ray & Charlotte Panter \* Stacie Wardlaw  
Linda Foster \* Debbie Creech \* Jeff & Stacy Chandler  
Missy Eakin \* Lisa Webb \* Denise Isbell \* Cynthia Hart

## VETERINARIANS

Pet Medical Center – Tullahoma  
Town & Country Veterinary Hospital – Winchester

## IN-KIND & CASH DONATIONS

Katie Gray \* Danielle DeRoche \* Brytnnee Treece  
Caryl McGee \* Linda Reed \* Caroline Farrington  
Jennifer Harrison \* Roberta Akins \* Sandra Parish Lawley  
Courtney Marler \* Debbie Bowling \* Sarah Hess  
Mike Crockett \* Peg Rindfleisch \* Lee Morris  
Michelle Young \* Sharon Dunkin \* Stephanie Lusk

## VOLUNTEERS

Animal Care: Brenan Bailey, Sami Green, Joanne Groat,  
Valerie Bjorn, Dana Bjorn, Amanda Hampton, Lena McKee,  
Tahira Mohyuddin, Amayla Knight, Angela Hensley, LouAnn  
Partington  
Webmaster Dana Bjorn

## 2015 RELEASES

March	4 Virginia Opossums
April	32 Eastern Cottontails 27 Eastern Gray Squirrels 30 Virginia Opossums 1 Fox Squirrel 1 Eastern Chipmunk 1 Southern Flying Squirrel 1 Cooper's Hawk 2 Eastern Screech Owls 1 Purple Finch
May	29 Eastern Cottontails 46 Eastern Gray Squirrels 40 Virginia Opossums 3 Fox Squirrels 6 Southern Flying Squirrels 1 American Woodcock 1 Mourning Dove 1 Killdeer
June	15 American Robins 3 Northern Cardinals 7 Eastern Bluebirds 1 Eastern Towhee 1 Red-headed Woodpecker 9 House Finches 3 Blue Jays 1 Northern Mockingbird

## THE BIG PAYBACK 2015

Thanks to the following donors, we raised \$870 during The Big Payback, The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee's one day on-line giving program: We were able to complete another flight conditioning cage for our songbirds!

Jane and Richard Eskin and Family Foundation  
Delek Fund for Hope  
LouAnn Partington  
Allyne Hart  
Jeff Cashdollar  
The Bjorn Family  
Adam Borchardt  
Linda Huggard  
Marcia Medford  
Veronica Bowers  
Anonymous

Ziggy's Tree Wildlife Rehabilitation Center  
92 Maple Ave.  
Tullahoma, TN 37388



**NOTICE: YOUR MAILING LABEL CONTAINS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE.**

To avoid any interruption with delivering your newsletter, we ask that you renew at least one month before the date shown. Use the Membership Form provided below.

**PLEASE RENEW, STAY INFORMED, WE NEED YOU!!!**

**YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT ZIGGY'S TREE, I AM ...**

- A NEW MEMBER**  
 **RENEWING MY MEMBERSHIP**

Memberships are for one year  
Gift Memberships are also available.

**Please Mail This Form To:**

**Ziggy's Tree WRC  
92 Maple Ave.  
Tullahoma, TN 37388**

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.**

___ Individual	\$25.00
___ Family	\$40.00
___ Supporting	\$100.00
___ Sustaining	\$250.00
___ Advocate	\$500.00
___ Wildlife Champion	\$1000.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ -- \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive my newsletter by email.

I am interested in volunteering in the following areas:

- \_\_\_ Environmental Education  
\_\_\_ Wildlife Rehabilitation  
\_\_\_ Fundraising

Checks should be made payable to Ziggy's Tree WRC.

Not sure what to get that special someone for birthdays, anniversaries or just because? Consider giving them a one year membership to Ziggy's Tree!

Members receive our quarterly newsletter.

*Ziggy's Tree strives to be environmentally conscious. If you would prefer to receive an electronic copy of our newsletter, please check the box above or e-mail [ziggystreewildlife@gmail.com](mailto:ziggystreewildlife@gmail.com) to be placed on our mailing list.*